

News from U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth
For Immediate Release
Contact: Russ Levsen, 202-226-4449

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE PUSHES BACK IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATORY COOL FOR MEAT

Herseth: Agribusiness Taking Precedence Over Needs Of Family Producers

Tuesday, May 17, 2005, Washington, D.C. - Late Monday night, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture approved a spending bill that includes language to further delay implementation of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) for meat and meat products.

U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth expressed strong opposition to this provision: "Mandatory COOL is on the books and should be implemented by now. Unfortunately, House Republican leadership is siding with corporate agriculture interests, and against the interests of family ranchers in South Dakota and across the country."

The COOL provision would prevent the Secretary of Agriculture from spending any money in fiscal 2006 to implement the food labeling rule that was originally signed into law as part of the 2002 Farm Bill. It is expected that this provision, if made law, would set implementation back until Sept 30, 2007. The spending bill now moves to the full Appropriations Committee for consideration the week of May 23.

Herseth added, "Mandatory COOL has already been pushed back once to 2006. This further delay makes clear that Congressional leadership sides with the multinational meatpackers over family ranchers. COOL is good for producers, good for consumers and good for America, and it should be implemented now."

Herseth also criticized the bill's cuts to conservation programs, with funding reduced to \$794 million – a \$37 million cut compared to fiscal 2005.

Rep. Herseth is a member of the House Agriculture Committee and its Horticulture and Livestock Subcommittee.

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